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United States
Department of
Agriculture

Office of
Information

Selected Speeches and News Releases

June 15 - June 22, 1989

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News Releases

U.S. Department of Agriculture • Office of Information

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, June 15—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-4.9) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, June 16, through midnight Thursday, June 22.

Since the adjusted world price (AWP) is above the 1987 crop and 1988 crop base quality loan rates of 52.25 and 51.80 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rate for 1987 crop and 1988 crop upland cotton during this period is equal to the respective loan rates for the specific quality and location.

The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Based on data for the week ending June 15, the AWP for upland cotton and the coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price

Northern Europe Price	75.83
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location	11.95
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	2.00
Average U.S. location	0.42
Sum of Adjustments	<u>-14.37</u>
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	61.46 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

Northern Europe Price	75.83
Northern Europe Coarse Count Price	<u>-72.25</u>
	3.58
Adjustment to SLM 1-inch cotton	<u>-4.15</u>
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	0.57 cents/lb.

The next AWP and coarse count adjustment announcement will be made on June 22.

Charles Cunningham (202) 447-7954

#

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AVAILABLE FOR GENETICALLY ENGINEERED TOMATO TRIAL

WASHINGTON, June 15—The U.S. Department of Agriculture has found no significant impact from field trials of tomatoes genetically engineered for insect resistance. The Monsanto Agriculture Company of Chesterfield, Mo., is conducting the test in Hughson, Calif.

The environmental assessment, developed by USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, reviewed scientific data from past trials and the proposed methods of an upcoming test to determine if it is likely to have a significant impact on the human environment.

Geneticists engineered the tomato to express a delta-endotoxin gene, which produces a toxin when ingested by certain caterpillars. The delta endotoxin gene occurs naturally in the bacteria, *Bacillus thuringiensis*.

Monsanto is also testing these experimental tomatoes in plots in Florida and Illinois under permits issued earlier by USDA.

Copies of the environmental assessment may be obtained by writing Linda Gordon, USDA, APHIS, BBEP, Rm. 844 6505 Belcrest Rd., Hyattsville, Md. 20782. A notice of this action was published in the June 12 Federal Register.

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DIRECTORY FOR SMALL-SCALE AGRICULTURE NOW AVAILABLE

WASHINGTON, June 16—All you ever wanted to know about small-scale agriculture—from animal health to weed control—is available in the "Directory for Small-Scale Agriculture," published by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Cooperative State Research Service.

The 100-page-plus small-scale agriculture directory, the first published by USDA, is available from the Superintendent of Documents,

Government Printing Office, in Washington, D.C. (Domestic price: \$5.50 per copy; foreign price, \$6.88.)

Dr. Charles E. Hess, assistant secretary of agriculture for science and education, said, "This directory will be invaluable not only to the seven out of every 10 American family farms classified as small-scale farms, but also to agricultural researchers and educators and lay people who till their backyard plots on weekends."

The directory, prepared by the Office for Small-Scale Agriculture, will enable users to quickly access nearly 500 key state and federal government experts who can answer questions about small-scale, diversified agriculture.

It also lists about 170 key words related to agricultural subjects which can be quickly cross-referenced to an appropriate expert.

For example, under the word "horticulture" are three related fields of horticulture: fruit, vegetables and ornamentals with a further breakdown which include diseases, marketing, and production. A state-by-state breakdown of experts in various agricultural topics also is listed.

The Office for Small-Scale Agriculture was created in 1986 to improve the flow of information about small-scale farming to agricultural producers and consumers. It also functions as a liaison to other USDA agencies to help direct research and educational programs to improve the usefulness of information received by small-scale farmers.

Howard Kerr, Jr. (202) 447-3640

#

SOIL FUNGUS DOES THE JOB OF MOTH BALLS IN WOOL

WASHINGTON, June 19—An extract from a soil fungus protects wool garments from moths and beetles longer than moth balls and it doesn't leave an odor, says a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist.

Roy E. Bry, an entomologist, said the wool protectant could probably be developed as an aerosol spray. It would not require consumers to store garments, as is the case using moth balls. He said the extract is now used commercially only to treat parasites in animals.

At least two companies are considering marketing the protectant, said Bry of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. It is derived from avermectin, an anti-parasitic agent produced by a soil fungus known as *Streptomyces avermitilis*.

“It’s very effective and durable, lasts at least five years and doesn’t carry the odor of moth balls,” said Bry at the agency’s Stored-Product Insects Research and Development Laboratory in Savannah, Ga. He conducted tests on the three worst enemies of wool fabric—the furniture carpet beetle, webbing clothes moth and black carpet beetle.

A solution of avermectin and acetone was poured on fabric samples, or fabric was submerged in a bath of water and avermectin at different temperatures and concentrations. Treated fabric, when dry, was placed for two weeks in petri dishes each holding 10 wool-infesting insects.

Bry and his colleagues found that 100 percent of furniture carpet beetle and webbing clothes moth larvae each died after exposure to the protectant. Also, 15 percent of the black carpet beetle larvae died while the remaining larvae were repelled.

Avermectin was developed by Merck & Co. of Rahway, N.J., to prevent internal parasites in animals. It is registered for these uses, but its use against wool pests would require approval by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Bry said.

Tests will be necessary to ensure that the treatments have no undesirable effect on those using or wearing treated garments, he said. He reported on the fungual extract in the latest issue of *Agricultural Research* magazine.

Bry said moth balls generally protect wool for a year. But, naphthalene—a petroleum chemical in the moth balls—vaporizes and loses its effectiveness.

Fabric treated with avermectin five years ago at the Savannah laboratory lost little if any of its protectant, he said. Also, he added, the avermectin deterred moths and beetles after three washings and three dry cleanings.

Bruce Kinzel (202) 447-4026

#

EXTENSION OKAYED FOR 1985-CROP CORN, SORGHUM FARMER-OWNED RESERVE LOANS

WASHINGTON, June 16—The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Commodity Credit Corporation announced today that it will permit 1985-crop farmer-owned reserve (FOR) corn and grain sorghum loans

maturing on or after Aug. 31 to be extended for six months, according to CCC Executive Vice President Keith Bjerke.

By allowing only extensions of these 1985-crop FOR corn and grain sorghum loans, CCC will provide producers the opportunity to deliver grain into the market in an orderly fashion. The action also will assure that domestic and foreign purchasers have reliable supplies available and that parties who transport and handle grain will have sufficient time and resources to move commodities from producers to purchasers.

Bjerke said the action will keep FOR quantities above the required level of 450 million bushels.

Bjerke also said that all other maturing FOR and regular price support loans are due on the date specified in the loan agreements.

As these loans mature, producers may either repay the loan with cash; use commodity certificates to acquire the commodity which has been pledged as collateral for the loan; or forfeit the grain to CCC.

Producers who extend their 1985-crop FOR corn and sorghum loans will continue to receive storage payments at an annual rate of 26.5 cents per year to be paid at time of settlement of their loans.

Producers may contact their county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office for further information.

Bruce Merkle (202) 447-6787

#

USDA WARNS U.S. LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY ON DISEASE-CARRYING TICKS

WASHINGTON, June 19—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is warning the nation's livestock industry to be on the alert for the African Bont tick and the African Bont-legged tick, exotic ticks known to transmit heartwater and East Coast fever in domestic animals.

Larry Slagle, acting administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, said three ticks found on an ostrich in late May in Andrews, Texas, were sent to Texas A & M University and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., where they were identified.

"On May 26, animal health officials found 15 more ticks on an ostrich in Quinlan, Texas, and sent them to the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa, for identification," said Slagle.

"The birds were part of a shipment of 44 adult ostriches imported

from Zimbabwe, Africa, on April 2 and quarantined at a privately-owned, USDA-approved facility in Mundelein, Ill.," he said. "After a 30-day quarantine, 25 birds were released and sent to several Texas cities: Andrews, Dennison, Lamesa and Quinlan, as well as Turpin and Lawton, Okla., and Graysville, Ohio."

Slagle said 50 ostrich chicks from Tanzania, Africa, were also imported on Jan. 25. On Feb. 23, 45 of these birds were released from a privately-owned, USDA-approved quarantine facility in Schaumburg, Ill. The chicks went to dealers in Indianapolis, Ind.; Kauai, Hawaii; Ocala, Tampa and Bushnell, Fla.; Burnsville, Minn.; Clayton, Ga.; Cape Girardeau, Mo.; Angelton and Lawton, Texas; Seneca, S.C.; and Faxon, Okla.

"So far, there is no evidence that the ticks have spread to U.S. livestock," said Slagle. Producers should check their animals for the reddish-orange or dark brown-colored ticks, which attach themselves to the neck, udder, hoof or tail area. Ticks often cause sores on cattle and lameness in sheep and goats. Producers should report ticks to local or state veterinarians or to the nearest APHIS office.

To prevent a disease outbreak, APHIS animal health officials have identified the ostriches and are treating the birds and the soil they have contacted with a pesticide used to control livestock ticks. Livestock that may have been exposed to the birds are being examined. All infected premises have been placed under state quarantine and are being treated with a pesticide.

Heartwater, a disease of cattle, sheep, goats and other ruminants, affects the heart, lymph nodes and brain, causing muscle twitching, diarrhea, convulsions and death. East Coast fever is a cattle disease that causes swelling of the lymph nodes, anorexia, nasal discharge, diarrhea and death. Neither disease affects humans.

Certain members of the Bont-legged tick family have been known to infect humans with Congo virus disease, a severe and sometimes fatal disease. However, the Bont-legged ticks removed from the ostriches are not known to transmit this disease.

Marlene Stinson (301) 436-7251

#

WIND EROSION WORST IN OVER 30 YEARS

WASHINGTON, June 19—Wind erosion damaged more than 14 million acres in the Great Plains during the November-through-May wind erosion season, reports the head of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Soil Conservation Service.

“It's been more than 30 years since we've seen so much damage,” said SCS Chief Wilson Scaling. “The last time was in 1954-55, when we began keeping records. That season, we had wind erosion damage on more than 15 million acres.

“The big reason for the increase is the drought,” said Scaling. “Not only was it dry, but it meant we went into the wind erosion season with inadequate vegetative cover and little residue to protect the soil from blowing. In many areas this winter, we didn't have snow cover and we had high velocity winds.”

The most dramatic damage was in Kansas on March 14. On that day winds up to 80 miles an hour damaged nearly 4.8 million acres, double the previous record for an entire season.

Kansas led all the Plains States with over 5 million acres of land reported damaged. It was a record for the state. North Dakota was second in damage, reporting 2.3 million acres. Texas was third in land damaged with almost 2 million acres.

SCS reports land damaged when small mounds or drifts of soil are observed, or blown soil covers vegetation.

The total of 14.3 million acres damaged is up from last year's total of nearly 12 million acres. More than 90 percent of the damage is on land being cropped. The rest is mostly rangeland.

Farmers used emergency tillage on more than 3 million acres during the reporting period. When there is enough moisture, this practice of roughening the surface helps control wind erosion. Texas accounted for nearly half of the total emergency tillage acreage—with more than 1.4 million acres.

Land in condition to blow totaled a record 23 million acres, nearly 4 million higher than the previous record set in 1983-84. Kansas again had the highest total, with a state record of nearly 4.2 million acres. Texas was second with 3.7 million acres. Colorado was third with 2.8 million acres, a record for that state.

Wind Erosion Damage, November 1988-May 1989

		Acres Damaged		Record High	
Counties		(Nov.-	(Nov.-	Acres	Year
Reporting		May 1989)	May 1988)		
Northern Great Plains					
Montana	40	1,832,000	1,292,800	2,648,100	1980-81
Nebraska	21	191,600	173,200	471,400	1964-65
North Dakota	53	2,297,700	3,538,600	3,538,600	1987-88
South Dakota	66	678,600	1,462,800	1,462,800	1987-88
Wyoming	23	552,700	291,400	1,475,500	1982-83
Subtotal		5,552,600	6,758,800	6,758,700	1987-88
Southern Great Plains					
Colorado	37	1,403,700	1,489,700	5,975,000	1954-55
Kansas	105	5,126,300	865,800	5,126,300*	1988-89
New Mexico	19	118,000	144,600	1,888,000	1954-55
Oklahoma	30	111,900	117,400	690,000	1954-55
Texas	147	1,979,600	2,495,600	5,691,800	1983-84
Subtotal		8,739,500	5,113,100	13,199,000	1954-55
TOTAL	541	14,292,100	11,871,900	15,789,000	1954-55

* Previous record for Kansas was 2,726,000 acres damaged in 1954-55.

Diana Morse (202) 447-4772

#

USDA EXTENDS COMMENT PERIOD FOR ADDITIONAL METHODS TO DESTROY TRICHINAE

WASHINGTON, June 19—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is extending the public comment period for its proposal on methods to destroy trichinae in cured country ham. In response to requests, comments will be accepted until August 18.

The proposal would allow processors to use certain amounts of potassium chloride as an alternative to salt to destroy trichinae in cured country ham. The initial comment period closed on June 19.

Federal regulations currently provide three approved curing methods for destroying trichinae in ham. The proposal modifies two of the methods and provides an additional method.

USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service inspects meat and poultry products to ensure that they are safe, wholesome and accurately labeled.

Notice of this action is in today's Federal Register. Comments should be sent to Policy Office, Attn: Linda Carey, FSIS Hearing Clerk, Room 3171, S-Building FSIS, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250. The proposal was published in the April 20 Federal Register.

Richard Bryant (202) 447-9113

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USDA REPEATS WARNING ON EXOTIC NEWCASTLE DISEASE

WASHINGTON, June 19—A recent outbreak of exotic Newcastle disease, a deadly viral disease of poultry and pet birds, has prompted the U.S. Department of Agriculture to again warn buyers of exotic birds to make certain that they meet federal import requirements.

“On June 14, we confirmed exotic Newcastle disease when 17 pet Amazon parrots, sun cockatoos and other small species of parrots died,” said Larry B. Slagle, acting administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. “The birds, owned by a private collector in Stratford, Conn., were tested at the APHIS National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa.

“The collector purchased seven of the Amazons from a Houston, Texas, dealer May 19,” he said. “The parrots became sick; and by June 9, five of them died. Twelve other birds, including one he sold to a pet store, were exposed to exotic Newcastle disease and later died.”

The collector sold birds to four other dealers in Fairfield, Stratford and Milford, Conn., and Marlboro, Mass., as well as to five private residences in Norwalk, Wilton, Middletown, Groton and Guilford, Conn. The pet stores and private premises were placed under quarantine. APHIS animal health officials are tracing any birds that were sold and are testing them for exotic Newcastle disease.

“To prevent further spread of the disease, the collector’s 60 remaining birds were destroyed on June 14 by APHIS animal health officials,” said Slagle. “APHIS will pay the collector over \$45,000 in indemnities for the loss of his birds.”

Slagle said that while no domestic poultry have been involved in the outbreaks, the highly contagious disease could easily invade poultry farms if left unchecked. Exotic Newcastle virus is deadly to all birds and could be a major problem for the commercial poultry industry. Since 1974, there has been an outbreak of this disease every year, except one, although no outbreaks have infected commercial poultry flocks.

According to Slagle, smuggled birds enter the country by the hundreds after the winter breeding season and often carry exotic Newcastle disease without showing symptoms. Exotic birds may enter the country legally from most countries. The birds must be declared to federal inspectors, accompanied by appropriate permits, and enter a minimum 30-day quarantine at one of six USDA-operated facilities or a privately owned, USDA-supervised, facility. APHIS tests the birds during quarantine to make certain they are free of communicable poultry diseases.

“Bird dealers put their businesses at risk if they buy smuggled birds, said Slagle. “Buyers in the United States should make certain they purchase them from legitimate sources and that the bird is wearing the circular stainless steel USDA-approved leg band. The band is engraved with three letters and three numbers.”

Slagle urged travelers, pet dealers and hobbyists to obtain a free pamphlet and fact sheet on the strict rules governing bird imports and how to avoid the purchase of smuggled birds. Write to “Pet Bird Pamphlet,” USDA-APHIS, Room 613, Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Marlene Stinson (301) 436-7255

#

USDA, CIBA-GEIGY TO DEVELOP MASS REARING PROJECT FOR BENEFICIAL WASP

WASHINGTON, June 20—The U.S. Department of Agriculture and Ciba-Geigy Corp., an international agribusiness firm, have entered into a joint venture to develop inexpensive mass rearing methods for two parasitic wasps that are natural controls of many major insect pests.

Under a cooperative research agreement with USDA's Agricultural Research Service, Ciba-Geigy, of Greensboro, N.C., will provide the agency \$242,703 over three years to develop an artificial diet and rearing system for *Trichogramma minutum* and *Trichogramma pretiosum* wasps, according to William C. Nettles, Jr., an entomologist with ARS.

The wasps, about the diameter of a human hair, lay their eggs inside those of over 200 insects, including codling moth, European corn borer, corn earworm, spruce budworm and Angoumois grain moth.

The wasp eggs develop into larvae that suck up the fluids of the host eggs before they hatch. A wasp usually deposits 2 to 20 eggs, depending on the size of the host egg.

Trichogramma wasps do not sting people or animals, said Nettles, an entomologist at ARS's new Biological Control of Pests Research Unit in Weslaco, Texas. "In terms of potentially wider agricultural use, *Trichogramma* is the primary beneficial parasite worldwide and probably the most widely known and studied," he said.

Studies have shown that the wasps, when released in an apple orchard, reduced the number of apple-chomping codling moths by up to 80 percent. The wasps have had similar success in Europe with European corn borer and other insects.

Nettles said researchers will attempt to come up with chemicals that will stimulate egg-laying by the wasps. They'll also work on a synthetic substitute for the wasps' lab diet of insect hemolymph, or insect blood, cow's milk and chicken egg yolk.

"We want to be able to feed the *Trichogramma* an artificial diet devoid of insect hemolymph that will support their growth to the adult stage," he said. "Although the wasps are commercially available now, they are generally reared on insect eggs, which is labor intensive. With an artificial diet, we could automate the system and cut down on labor costs."

Don V. Allemann, an entomologist with Ciba-Geigy, said the company, interested in the wasp as a biological control, has not yet determined where the insect can be commercially marketed.

"We are getting into this strictly as a research project to see, first of all, if we can learn the ARS technique of rearing this thing artificially," he said. "If that can happen, the next step is to carry it into some practical market situation."

Allemann said the company's primary interest will be forest and crop insect controls.

“Whether it’s a corn field or forest area, the wasp normally occurs at such low levels that the pest population can overwhelm it,” he said. “The question to the industry would be: Is there something we can do to even the odds to some degree? That’s one of the things we’re going to try to learn.”

Ciba-Geigy will make 12 quarterly payments of \$20,225 to ARS. New discoveries or inventions made solely by the research agency or Ciba-Geigy will be owned separately by the inventors. Joint inventions will share ownership. If ARS files a patent, Ciba-Geigy will have the right of first refusal for an exclusive license to the invention, according to the agreement.

Matt Bosisio (309) 685-4011

#

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES

WASHINGTON, June 20—Under Secretary of Agriculture Richard T. Crowder today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels, 12.20 cents per pound;
- medium grain whole kernels, 11.33 cents per pound;
- short grain whole kernels, 11.24 cents per pound;
- broken kernels, 6.10 cents per pound.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, rough rice world prices are estimated to be:

- long grain, \$7.54 per hundredweight;
- medium grain, \$7.10 per hundredweight;
- short grain, \$6.76 per hundredweight.

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EDT. The next scheduled price announcement will be made June 27 at 3 p.m. EDT, although prices may be announced sooner if warranted.

Gene Rosera (202) 447-7923

#

USDA PROPOSES DECREASES IN IMPORTED PORK ASSESSMENTS

WASHINGTON, June 21—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to decrease assessments on imported pork and pork products by three-to-five hundredths of a cent per pound, or the equivalent of seven-to-eleven hundredths of a cent per kilogram.

Kenneth C. Clayton, acting administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the proposed downward adjustment reflects the 15-percent decrease in hog prices paid at major U.S. markets this past year. The assessment adjustment is authorized by the Pork Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Act of 1985, he said. The rate of assessment, one-quarter of one percent of market price, remains unchanged.

“Assessments on imported pork and pork products are established by formula each year, based on U.S. market prices for hogs,” Clayton said. “This proposed change will bring importer assessments more in line with those being paid by domestic producers.”

The proposed changes will appear in the June 22 Federal Register. Comments, postmarked no later than July 24, may be sent to Ralph L. Tapp, Chief, Marketing Programs and Procurement Branch, Livestock and Seed Division AMS, USDA, Rm. 2610-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456. Copies of the proposed rule and additional information are available from Tapp.

Clarence Steinberg (202) 447-6179

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